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General Assembly
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General Assembly
Fifty-sixth session
Agenda items 41, 42, 101, 119 (a) and (b) and 166

Security Council
Fifty-sixth year

Question of Palestine

The situation in the Middle East

Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources

Human rights questions: implementation of human rights instruments; human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Letter dated 16 November 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the statement issued by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Rio Group on the subject of the crisis in the Middle East, at their meeting held on 14 November 2001 on the occasion of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly (see annex).

On behalf of the States members of the Rio Group, I should be grateful if you could arrange for the present letter and its annex to be circulated as a document of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, under agenda items 41, 42, 101, 119 (a), (b) and 166, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Juan Gabriel **Valdés**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 16 November 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Spanish]

Statement by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Rio Group on the crisis in the Middle East

In view of the grave crisis in the Middle East peace process, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the countries of the Rio Group, meeting in New York on 14 November 2001 on the occasion of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, wish to state as follows:

1. They most vigorously condemn the acts of violence and the use and threat of the use of force, recognizing that the only valid method of achieving peace is to use the mechanisms for the peaceful settlement of disputes which have been accepted and recognized by the international community, including, in particular, dialogue and negotiation among the parties involved in the conflict.

2. In this regard, the member countries of the Rio Group reaffirm their adherence to the United Nations resolutions which have created the legal framework for the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in essence on the basis of the constitution of an independent, viable and democratic State for the Palestinian people and security for Israel within internationally recognized borders, and reiterate their concern that the negotiations on the peace process, which began in Oslo in 1993, should be resumed. For this purpose, the Rio Group once again urges the parties involved in the conflict to desist immediately from all acts of violence and to return to the peace process negotiations as soon as possible, and appeals to them to consider all methods conducive to the attainment of that end and to comply with the international community's initiatives and appeals for peace, especially the appeal for the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Mitchell report.

3. The Ministers of the Rio Group countries also urge the entire international community, in particular those countries or groups of countries which have historically borne responsibility in the quest for solutions to the Middle East conflict, to continue to assist the parties involved to resume the peace process negotiations and to monitor and ensure compliance with the commitments freely made by the parties, in the interests of international peace and security, the unrestricted protection of human rights, respect for cultural and religious values and symbols, progress, well-being and development, and cooperation among the peoples in the Middle East region.

New York, 14 November 2001